

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.121 the following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating a chat session between a first user and a second user visiting a first web site, comprising:

receiving, from the first user, at least a first user ID corresponding to the first user, ~~a co-branded community to which the user belongs~~ and an address of a first web site being visited by the first user;

receiving, from the second user, at least a second user ID corresponding to the second user, ~~a second co-branded community to which the second user belongs~~ and the address of the first web site;

receiving, from other users, at least a user ID corresponding to each of the
other users and the address of the first web site;

receiving from said first, second, and other users respective parameter criteria relating to interests of said first, second and other users, respectively;

~~providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID and the second co-branded community;~~

receiving, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on
preferred parameter criteria;

matching the preferred parameter criteria from among the parameter criteria received from the second and the other users to locate chat partners;

transmitting, to the first user, identities of users matching the preferred parameter criteria;

the transmitting step including the step of providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;

receiving, from the first user, a request to open a semi-public chat session with the second user;

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested the semi-public chat session;

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session; and

selecting the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users located in the matching step, having the preferred predetermined criteria received from the first user, can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

at least one of the first user and the second user designating the semi-public chat session selectively visible.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the chat session may be continued when at least one of the first user and the second user disconnects from the first web site.

receiving from said first, second, and other users respective parameter criteria relating to interests of said first, second and other users, respectively;

receiving, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on preferred parameter criteria;

matching the preferred parameter criteria from among the parameter criteria received from the second and the other users to locate chat partners;

transmitting, to the first user, identities of users matching the preferred parameter criteria;

the transmitting step including the step of providing, to the first user, at least
an indication of the second user ID;

receiving, from the first user, a request to open a semi-public chat session with the second user;

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested the semi-public chat session;

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session designated by the first user; and

selecting the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users located in the matching step, having the preferred predetermined criteria received from the first user, can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

at least one of the first user and the second user designating the semi-public chat session selectively visible.

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

~~providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;~~

receiving, from other users, a respective user ID corresponding to one of the other users and the address of the first web server;

receiving from said first, second, and other users respective parameter criteria relating to interests of said first, second and other users, respectively;

receiving, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on preferred parameter criteria;

matching the preferred parameter criteria from among the parameter criteria received from the second and the other users to locate chat partners;

transmitting, to the first user, identities of users matching the preferred parameter criteria received from the first user;

the transmitting step including the step of providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;

receiving, from the first user, a request to open a semi-public chat session with the second user;

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested the semi-public chat session;

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session designated by the first user; and

selecting the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users located in the matching step, having the preferred predetermined criteria received from the first user, can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

~~at least one of the first user and the second user designating the semi-public chat session selectively visible.~~

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for facilitating a semi-public chat session between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing processing instructions for controlling the processor, the processor operative with the processing instructions to:

receive, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receive, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

~~provide, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;~~

receive, from other users, a respective user ID corresponding to one of the other users and the address of the first web server;

receiving from said first, second, and other users respective parameter criteria relating to interests of said first, second and other users, respectively;

receive, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on preferred parameter criteria;

match the preferred parameter criteria from among the parameter criteria received from the second and the other users to locate chat partners

transmit, to the first user, identities of users matching the preferred parameter criteria;

wherein the identities of users includes at least an indication of the second user ID;

receive, from the first user, a request to open a semi-public chat session with the second user;

transmit, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested the semi-public chat session;

receive, from the second user, an acceptance to enter the semi-public chat session designated by the first user; and

select the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users with parameter criteria which matches the preferred predetermined criteria received from the first user can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

~~accept, from at least one of the first user and the second user, a designation that the semi-public chat session is selectively visible.~~

11. (Currently Amended) A method for facilitating a communication between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the method, comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

~~providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;~~

receiving, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on preferred parameter criteria;

determining if parameter criteria from the second user and other users match the preferred parameter criteria received from the first user;

receiving, from the first user, a request to communicate with the second user in a semi-public chat session; and

if the second user matches the preferred criteria, selecting the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users identified in the determining step, having the preferred predetermined criteria received from the first user, can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

~~at least one of the first user and the second user designating the semi-public chat session selectively visible.~~

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, further comprising:

transmitting, to the second user, an indication that the first user has requested a communication; and

receiving, from the second user, an acceptance to receive a communication from the first user.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for performing a method for facilitating a communication between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the method comprising:

receiving, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receiving, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

~~providing, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;~~

receiving, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on preferred parameter criteria;

determining if parameter criteria received from the second user and other users match the preferred parameter criteria received from the first user;

receiving, from the first user, a request to communicate with the second user in a semi-public chat session; and

if the second user matches the preferred criteria, selecting the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users identified in the determining step, having the preferred

predetermined criteria received from the first user, can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

~~at least one of the first user and the second user designating the semi-public chat session selectively visible.~~

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for facilitating a communication between a first user and second user, both visiting a first web server, the apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a memory storing processing instructions for controlling the processor, the processor operative with the processing instructions to:

receive, from the first user, a first user ID corresponding to the first user and an address of the first web server;

receive, from the second user, a second user ID corresponding to the second user and the address of the first web server;

~~provide, to the first user, at least an indication of the second user ID;~~

receive, from the first user, a request to locate chat partners based on preferred parameter criteria;

determine if parameter criteria received from the second user and other users match the preferred parameter criteria;

receive, from the first user, a request to communicate with the second user;

provide to the second user an address for communicating with the second user in a semi-public chat session; and

if the second user matches the preferred criteria, select the visibility of the semi-public chat session such that only users determined to have the preferred predetermined criteria received from the first user can view and participate in the semi-public chat session.

~~accept, from at least one of the first user and the second user, a designation~~
~~that the semi-public chat session is selectively visible.~~

15 (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the semi-public chat session is visible only to users having a user profile predetermined by at least one of the first user, second user, and other participants in the chat session.